investigated and severe punishment has been awarded besides transferring the staff found responsible. For redressal of grievances, the passenger can approach the Station Superintendent and Dy. Station Superintendent/Station Master, who are available at Haridwar station.

Renewal contract for book/catering/vending stalls in Northern Railway

761. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the period of a number of bookstalls and catering/vending stall contracts has expired and has not been renewed for the last two years on Allahabad, Delhi, Ambala and Ferozepur Divisions of Northern Railway; and

(b) if so, what are the detailed reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Bookstall and catering/vending licences are renewed after completion of the agreement period subject to satisfactory performance of the licensees and screening is done by a committee of officers at divisional level. However, some backlog was created due to review of licence fee and catering policy. Screening for renewal of these cases is in progress.

Production of Brake Blocks in Dahod

762. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the production of Brake Blocks in Dahod and other workshops on 'Western Railways;

(b) the rate of Brake Blocks on which these are being supplied to Western Railways;

(c) whether Dahod and other workshops are not able to fully meet the demand;

(d) if so, the rate at which the same are being purchased from open market;

(e) whether Government asked Dahod and other workshops to increase the output;

(f) if so, the response thereto; and

(g) whether Government would continue to purchase at higher cost and lose much revenue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a)

Workshop	Avg. per month during *1999-2000* (N< 5S.)	Weight (Tonnes)
KOTA	13070	190.795
DAHOD	45121	644.797
A.1MER	36094	444.662
TOTAL:	94285	1280.254

(b) The brake blocks manufactured in the Railways Workshops arc being supplied to Western Railway at rates varying from Rs. 113 to Rs. 375 per brake block depending upon the design of the brake block and the type of rolling stock. This includes both Metre Gauge and Broad Gauge *stock.*

(c) Dahod and other workshops are able to fully meet the demand of Western Railway.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

(e) Increase in output is not required as the demand is already being fully met. Moreover, composition brake blocks are being increasingly introduced in a phased manner.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) Does not arise. However, the Railways have taken a conscious decision to switch over to the use of composition brake blocks on its

rolling stock. These brake blocks cost 2 to 2.5 times more but give a life of more than 5 times that of Cast Iron brake blocks and are therefore economical to use. The Asbestos free composition brake blocks being inducted are also environmental friendly.

Conversion of M.G. Lines in Gujarat

763. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to stater

(a) whether all the metre gauge lines have been converted into broad gauge in all the five western States, other than Gujarat;

(b) if so, the reasons for not converting 2500 metre gauge lines into broad gauge in Gujarat while Railway earnings through Gujarat are the highest than that each in all the western States; and

(c) the steps being taken to convert the metre gauge line of Gujarat into broad gauge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGIVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no proposal to convert all MG lines into BG, 'Project Unigauge' taken up by the Railways is for selective conversion of MG/NG lines to BG in a phased manner based on considerations of capacity requirement, developmental potential and on strategic considerations.

(c) Work is in progress on conversion of Wankaner-Maliya Miyana, Gandhidham-Bhuj, Rajkot-Veraval, Viramgam-Mahesana-Patan, Surendernagar-Bhavnagar-Dhola-Dhasa-Mahuva with linked fingers and Dharangadhara-Kuda into broad gauge. Gauge conversion of Gandhidham-Palanpur MG line has also been included in the Budget and would be taken up after obtaining the requisite clearances. The remaining lines would be considered in the coming years based on the traffic potential and the availability of resources, once some of the ongoing projects get completed.